

SUSAN SHERIDAN

*Gentlemen's Agreements: Southerly's First Editors*

In this issue of *Southerly* in honour of Elizabeth Webby, I offer this piece about the journal's early years in special appreciation of her pioneering work as a woman editor in a field where female names appear rarely. Academic R. G. (Guy) Howarth (1939–55) and poet Kenneth Slessor (1956–62) were the first two editors, to be succeeded by G. A. Wilkes's marathon editorship from 1963 to 1988, then Elizabeth's from 1988 to 1999. This article is focused on the friendship of the first two editors, their shared literary tastes, and their relations with other literary figures.<sup>1</sup> Slessor and Howarth shared a moderate taste for literary modernism and a strong taste for literary socialising. Their story, seen as part of a larger story about writing and gender on the post-war Australian literary scene, offers a telling illustration of the way a literary magazine operated its predominantly male networks.

Much of *Southerly's* history is well known, thanks to the indefatigable efforts of Stuart Lee as chronicler of the journal's development, its relations with its parent body, the English Association, and its editors and publishers.<sup>2</sup> I would like to go behind the scenes of the published text and explore some of the networking that went on, at a time when the literary field was not only deeply divided by politics—another well-known story—but also by gender. While there were numerous talented women writers and editors around during the years immediately after World War II, they tend to be fugitive figures in biographies and histories of the period.

Gwen Harwood's complaints about neglectful journal editors are a recurrent motif in her witty letters to friends, and some of them point the finger at *Southerly*: "*Southerly* has rejected every poem I have sent them for years", she remarked.<sup>3</sup> Somewhat giving the lie to this claim, she tells another correspondent: "I have had some rotten deals

from editors; *Southerly* accepted a poem in January 1957. They have never used it ... I have written 3 (three) times enclosing stamps for reply, but the letters have been ignored".<sup>4</sup> She wrote allusive, highly wrought poems, but it would seem that this was less important than the fact that she was an unknown woman, who lived in Hobart (and this was a very Sydney-centred publication). Here is reason, if a specific instance were needed, to examine *Southerly's* performance on both publishing women and publishing innovative writing.

*Southerly's* founding editor, Guy Howarth, was a graduate of the University of Sydney, and had attended Fort Street Boys' High School, where he was a contemporary of A. D. Hope. He won a scholarship in 1929 to Oxford, where (as was the custom then) he took a B.Litt. He was appointed to a lectureship in the English Department at Sydney in 1933. His main teaching and research areas were Elizabethan, Jacobean and Restoration literature, and he himself was an accomplished poet in a rather seventeenth-century style. He also had a strong interest in English modernist literature (he published a book on Sitwell and Pound, *Some Modern Writers*) and after his return to Australia developed extensive knowledge of Australian writing, which is manifest in *Southerly* under his editorship, in articles and edited books, and in his reviewing for the *Sydney Morning Herald*. During his twenty-three years at Sydney University he was President of the English Association (1947–55), served on the Advisory Board of the Commonwealth Literary Fund (1950–55), was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature (1952) and was a foundation member of the Australian Humanities Research Council (1954–55).<sup>5</sup>

In the journal and in his teaching Howarth championed modernist writing—by women as well as men. He published an article on Virginia Woolf in *Southerly* in 1942 (vol. 3, no. i), and supervised a Master's thesis on her work.<sup>6</sup> He "raised eyebrows", according to Stuart Lee, by introducing students to Hopkins, Eliot, the Sitwells, Joyce, Faulkner and Auden. Judith Wright recalls his introducing "daringly modern authors, such as Eliot, startling us into not very well-informed argument". This excitement led her to experiment with "free verse and linguistic entanglements I fondly imagined were Hopkinsian", poems which did not find publishers: "Australia was no



place for experiment, I decided".<sup>7</sup> However, Howarth's *Southerly* published some of her earliest poems, from 1946 onwards.<sup>8</sup>

Thelma Herring, recalling her time as a student during Howarth's first years of lecturing at Sydney, said that although he admired Joyce, he "wasn't able to lecture on him in those timid days". Miss Herring (as she was known to her students) became a lecturer in the English Department, perhaps the first and for many years the only woman in such a position, and was closely connected with *Southerly* as a reviewer and later as President of the English Association. She recalled that it was through Guy Howarth that she met many Australian writers (and, during the war, the American poets Schapiro and Roskolenko) for "he was an academic who was also a journalist and a writer who consorted with writers". He entertained at his flat in Young Street. Through him she gained her knowledge of Australian literature, and her first interest in Patrick White. She remembered that it was his review of *The Aunt's Story* in *Southerly* that first made her aware of White's work, with his claim that, "Christina Stead having committed formal suicide," White was about the only "expert Australian stylist in the novel".<sup>9</sup>

How much of this commitment to modernism carried over into Howarth's editorial practice is difficult to say, given the prevalence of censorship, formal and informal, in Australia at the time. Writer Margaret Trist recalled that he had trouble with work considered "outspoken" or "too close to the bone"—usually in the judgement of the printer, concerned on his wife's behalf!<sup>10</sup> In a 1940 editorial he stated that the editors welcomed original work, but that they were obliged to "observe ordinary decency". He added, "they do not feel called upon to publish political views, as such", but would not be put off by "obscurity, oddness of form or expression, complete unorthodoxy in whatever shape". In a 1942 editorial attacking the banning of *Ulysses*, he put forward the somewhat blandly inclusive defence that "we shall have modern literature whether we like it or not"; but in claiming, as well, that "modern literature is the literature of the young", he declared *Southerly*'s commitment to publishing new writers.<sup>11</sup>

By the time Howarth resigned from *Southerly* and the English Department to take up the Arderne Chair of English at the University

of Cape Town in 1955, *Southerly* was more of an academic journal, in that it now published a significant amount of literary criticism and history as well as poems, stories and short reviews. Under his editorship, as well, the amount and quality of Australian literature, criticism and reviews steadily increased. This may have been in part a response to Angus & Robertson's contribution to the journal's publication from 1944 onwards and its increased size to four larger issues per year.<sup>12</sup> But it also reflected Howarth's ever-widening circle of literary friends and acquaintances, especially in Sydney. When Slessor added the sub-title, "a review of Australian Literature" in 1957, the journal was already effectively that. Few of the writers were female, however, and few of the works were experimental.

It was not then, if it ever had been, a nest of modernists. H. M. Green described Howarth's *Southerly* in his *History* (1956) as conservative, rather narrowly literary, "sometimes dull".<sup>13</sup> By "narrowly literary" he no doubt meant *Southerly*'s avoidance of the Cold War cultural politics that preoccupied its major rival at the time, *Meanjin*. The epithets "conservative" and "sometimes dull" may comment on its literary offerings; but they could also be read as referring to *Southerly*'s close connection to the university, as Howarth himself read them.<sup>14</sup> This link was to be loosened under the editorship of Kenneth Slessor: *Southerly* became more "town" than "gown".

Unlike his predecessor, Slessor, then a senior journalist with the *Sun* and President of the Journalists' Club, was not a member of the English Association. Indeed it was not the Association's new President, Thelma Herring, who persuaded him to accept the editorship but Beatrice Davis and Alec Bolton, representing the journal's publishers, Angus & Robertson.<sup>15</sup> Slessor was already a widely known and highly regarded poet, and under his editorship poetry and stories predominated, with fewer articles. New younger poets to appear included Les Murray, Tom Shapcott, Bruce Beaver, Geoff Lehmann, Chris Wallace-Crabbe, Vivian Smith—and Sylvia Lawson (who recalled being snubbed by the great man himself in the Journalists' Club<sup>16</sup>). Frank Moorhouse's first story appeared in *Southerly* ("The Young Girl and the American Sailor" (18, iv, 1957, 212–4), as did innovative fiction by Hal Porter, Ray Mathew, Barry Oakley, and Amy Witting.



*Southerly's* appearance continued to be stylish, perhaps showing the hand of Alec Bolton: thick paper, spacious layout, an art deco cover, photo portraits of writers prefacing each issue. Slessor published some lighter pieces, including "Shylock and the Law, 1956" (a re-write of the Trial Scene from *The Merchant of Venice*) contributed by the Prime Minister, R. G. Menzies, at the editor's invitation.<sup>17</sup>

Given the conservative Menzies' notorious interventions in the business of the Commonwealth Literary Fund (CLF), this act on Slessor's part could well have been seen as political side-taking, although he expressed strong disapproval of such interventions and opposed censorship. In the same letter to Howarth in which he tells a story of Menzies' political interference in the business of the CLF, Slessor writes of his decision to take on *Southerly*: "I want to make sure that the magazine goes on in the course you set for it—that is, as a literary review and an Australian review at that, and not as an arty-political-sociological propaganda-sheet in the style of *Meanjin*".<sup>18</sup> Indeed, *Southerly* was known at the CLF Advisory Board as "Caesar's Wife" because it was "virtuous in having no politics".<sup>19</sup>

How did this succession in *Southerly's* editorship from academic to poet and journalist come about? The two literary men-about-town had become friends some years earlier, and glimpses of their friendship over a fifteen-year period can be gleaned from the typewritten copies of Slessor's letters to him that Howarth donated to the National Library.<sup>20</sup> The first of them dates from 1944, when Slessor was back in Sydney, having resigned his post as an official war correspondent. After an exchange concerning the special J. A. R. Mackellar issue of *Southerly*, Slessor responds to an invitation to contribute to the Angus & Robertson 1944 anthology that Howarth is editing, sending what he describes as "some rather fragmentary verse" [24.8.44]. This turned out to be "Beach Burial", written at El Alamein. It would become one of his most famous poems, first published in *Southerly* 5, iii, 1944, 13.

After these rather formal exchanges, Slessor writes inviting Howarth to have dinner with him at Potts Point some night, "or tea on Sunday afternoon", so that they can have "a longer talk ... or rather I'd like to listen to *you* talk about the seventeenth century poets who are my

special delight, though my acquaintance with them isn't half as deep or full as yours" [28.11.44]. It's a charming invitation, and it's repeated a fortnight later when the poet writes to thank the critic for "that rather overwhelming Herald review [of *One Hundred Poems*] which embarrassed me by its generosity. I feel liable to arrest at any time on a charge of false pretences" [12.12.44]. The budding friendship was interrupted by the diagnosis of Slessor's wife Noela with cancer, and her tragic death in October 1945. He writes of "trying to adjust myself to a new way of life" [28.10.45], and of the "emotional desolation" he still feels months later [28.5.46].

As their contact resumes, the constant link between the two men is *Southerly*. In the letter just quoted, Slessor refers to their shared objections to Walter Murdoch's *Oxford Book of Australian Verse* and offers to "send you a blast for *Southerly*" about it. In the letters of 1948 and after he addresses Howarth more intimately as "Dear Guy", thanking him for the *Southerly* containing Tom Inglis Moore's complimentary article about his poetry [20.1.48] and responding to Howarth's editorial advice about "Polarities" [9.3.48]. This, his last published poem, was about his affair with Kathleen McShine and it appeared in *Southerly* (9, ii, 1948). Slessor offers to write a reply for *Southerly* to Jack Lindsay's article about *Vision*, the magazine that they were both involved with as young acolytes of Norman Lindsay. He dismissed this article as "a deadly serious post-mortem of a butterfly which died about 30 years ago", adding "Jack was always an earnest man" [30.5.52]. Slessor seems offended by the implication that he was profoundly influenced by *Vision*, yet he was still devoted to Norman, Jack's father. In the course of this reply, "Spectacles for the Fifties", it emerges that what really offends him is Jack Lindsay's "post-*Vision* desire that poetry should 'come to grips with the social struggle'." He calls this "a sanctified totalitarian principle" which is "deadening literature at the present time", making comparisons with "Russia, Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia and other totalitarian [sic] countries".<sup>21</sup>

As well as the assumption of shared views, there is also flattery as a seal to friendship. When Slessor delivered a series of lectures at the University of Sydney in 1954, in the final one, entitled "Australian Verse—Light and Bad", he spent some considerable time quoting from



Howarth's essay, "The Stuffed Mopoke" (from *Southerly* 1, iii, July 1940: the title alludes to Wyndham Lewis and Charles Lee's anthology of bad verse, *The Stuffed Owl*). He reproduces several of the howlers, with Howarth's sardonic comments as well.<sup>22</sup>

Reciprocal favours, the currency of such professional friendships, included Howarth's invitation to Slessor to join him and Harry Green as judges of the Grace Leven Prize for poetry [27.1.50], his promotion of Slessor by setting his poems in the Leaving Honours paper [19.1.49], and quoting them in an ABC broadcast [20.9.50]. It is possible that Howarth was also behind the invitation Slessor received in 1953 to join the Commonwealth Literary Fund advisory board, which at that time included Howarth, Tom Inglis Moore and Archibald Grenfell Price. Slessor's note on this occasion suggests that they might travel to Canberra together [4.11.53].

A further dimension of friendship develops after Slessor has remarried, in 1951. His letters refer to shared social occasions with the wives, and he usually signs off sending "love to Lilian" (Howarth's second wife). His promise of a dinner invitation when he is about to become a father for the first time suggests that Slessor had no idea what changes the Happy Event (as he called it) would bring to his and his wife Pauline's life [8.8.52]. Just a few weeks after Paul Slessor's birth, the new father jokes: "Many thanks for your kind note on my paternity. You will be glad to know that I have made a successful recovery and am now practically normal" [9.9.52].

Some six months later comes an invitation to both Guy and Lilian to "the Feast of the Charred Chops", at which Patricia and John Thompson would also be present [9.2.53]. This must have been the first meeting of the triumvirate who would go on to edit the *Penguin Book of Australian Verse*, which appeared (after many delays) in 1958. They must have started work on it immediately, for in October that year Howarth writes about the choice of some of his own poems made by Slessor and Thompson—"self-criticism won't allow me to approve of more than two"—and reminds Slessor to visit the following Friday, with his wife, to meet the literary scholar, Morris Miller.<sup>23</sup>

When the Howarths left Sydney for Cape Town, Slessor sent the following verses:

Why do we hang ourselves with crape?

Because Guy's going to the Cape.

Why do the ladies pant and sigh?

Because the Cape is getting Guy.

Why do we look so dull and wan?

Because our RGH has gone.

Why do we sit about and mope?

Because we haven't one Good Hope.\*

\*Except, of course, as you'll agree

The one who signs himself A.D.

Why is our Southerly distressed?

Because the editor's gone West.

Why can't we dine with Guy today?

Because his table's Table Bay.

Why doesn't Lilian arise and shine?

Because she's drinking Drakenberger wine.

What shall we do to bring them back once more?

Burn gumleaves just outside the door.

This affectionate missive [7.2.55] was prefaced by the comment "May you be devoured neither by lions nor by poetesses". "Poetesses" were as exotic as lions, and as fearsome, at least to Slessor. Literary men of their generation accepted Judith Wright, and sometimes Rosemary Dobson, as poets, but then Wright became the (female, and therefore different) gold standard against which "poetesses" were negatively compared. Douglas Stewart, who had a close working relationship with Nancy Keesing, wrote asking Slessor to get the *Sun* to review her self-published book of poetry in 1951. Even so, he felt constrained to apologise that "she may not be a Judith Wright" but nevertheless had produced some "damned good stuff".<sup>24</sup> Similarly the biographical note on Elizabeth Riddell in the *Penguin Book of Modern Australian Verse* rates her "not very far behind Judith Wright in the front rank of women who are writing poetry in Australia today".<sup>25</sup> It's little wonder that most women of this generation later resisted being re-classified as "women writers" in feminist literary enterprises.



Men of letters of the 1950s and 60s rarely published women. In the Penguin anthology, and also the Rigby *Australian Poets Speak*, edited by Colin Thiele and Ian Mudie in 1961, women make up fewer than one in seven contributors.<sup>26</sup> Yet even this proportion should be seen as some recognition that an unprecedented number of women were writing good poetry in the post-war years. By comparison, the proportion of women publishing in *Southerly* in these same years—reviews and short fiction as well as poetry—was even lower, closer to the “one out of twelve” ratio that Tillie Olsen found when, in 1971, she made a rough calculation of the representation of twentieth-century women writers in American anthologies and college English syllabi.<sup>27</sup> *Southerly*’s representation of women, and the attitudes of its first editors to women writers, should be seen in this wider context.

Yet there were other options: the change in 1962 when Slessor resigned and *Southerly* was edited by Walter Stone, with a female-dominated editorial committee, is astounding: almost half of the pieces published that year are by or about women. Earlier, when Rosemary Dobson edited the annual Angus & Robertson poetry anthology of 1949–50, there were twelve women and seventeen men.<sup>28</sup> It would not do to be too easily satisfied with the explanation that the near-absence of women was simply a sign of the times: some further analysis of this masculine literary gate-keeping, and its concomitant networking, is called for.

Guy Howarth did have some literary women friends: his wife Lilian was a scholar in her own right, having edited a selection of Rossetti, and being an occasional contributor to *Southerly*. He was on good terms with Beatrice Davis, the formidable Angus & Robertson editor and English Association stalwart, who shared with him a great admiration for the poet Hugh McCrae. As we’ve seen, both Thelma Herring, his colleague, and Margaret Trist, *Southerly* writer and member of the English Association, wrote tributes after his death in 1974. Yet Nancy Keesing tells of being set up, as a young woman, when Guy and Lilian Howarth encouraged her to prepare a lecture on Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* for the English Association and then mocked her for lacking a properly scholarly approach to her subject.<sup>29</sup>

Slessor seems to have had few women friends or protégées. Elizabeth Riddell, who worked with him on *Smith's Weekly* in the 1930s, described him as “a cold fish” and “a glum man, stuttering irritably over small things, doing as little as possible for his salary”.<sup>30</sup> Letters from literary women among his papers are few, but indicative. Thelma Herring addressed him as “Mr Slessor” when she wrote on behalf of the English Association to congratulate him on his O.B.E. [3020/1/276]. Rosemary Dobson, who must have met him several times in Sydney, also addressed him formally as “Dear Kenneth Slessor” when she wrote inviting him to join a gathering in honour of Douglas Stewart, on the occasion of his resignation as editor of the *Bulletin Red Page* in 1962 [3020/1/328]. Grace Perry wrote to him as editor of *Southerly*, asking his advice about the quality of her recent poetry. Twenty years earlier, she said, before she became a medical student, she had published verse that was acclaimed by Guy Howarth, among others, but she was not sure “if I have any ability by adult standards”. His drafted response was that her work was “not first or even second class”: “I am sure that your career lies in medicine and the kindness of your devotion to other people’s afflictions, and not in poetry”.<sup>31</sup>

Slessor’s attitude to women, both actual and metaphorical, has been perceptively analysed by critic Adrian Caesar in the context of the pervasive ideology of masculine supremacy. He argues that when feeling is expressed in Slessor’s poems, *Five Bells* being a prime instance, “men are the principal locus of positive feeling, while negative feelings are associated with nature which might be regarded, and certainly in the 1920s and 1930s would have been regarded, as the ‘female’ principle”.<sup>32</sup>

The young Nancy Cato is a rare female voice among the many male ones writing warmly to thank Slessor for his encouragement (31 March 1948).<sup>33</sup> He inspired strong affection as well as emulation from male writers, as is evident in dozens of letters from younger men thanking Slessor for his advice, help and hospitality, as well as from his own mentors, Norman and Lionel Lindsay and Hugh McCrae, and his contemporaries like Douglas Stewart and R. D. Fitzgerald. In later tributes to *Southerly*, both Frank Moorhouse and Tom Shapcott



tell of their pleasure in being published there by Slessor. Shapcott's first publication was a sonnet in the *Bulletin*, but "without doubt my first real breakthrough in the literary world was when Kenneth Slessor, then the editor of *Southerly*, accepted a group of six poems, which were more innovative" in 1956.<sup>34</sup> Moorhouse, then in 1957 a young journalist on the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, was delighted to be published by another journalist-writer. He sketches a "chain of literary genealogy" linking himself with Slessor, linking Slessor via his first publication in the *Bulletin* by David McKee Wright, successor to J. F. Archibald, who was in turn trained by ... and so on.<sup>35</sup> Both he and Shapcott tell stories of being teased by Slessor, as does Douglas Stewart of his first meeting with this "simultaneously impish and majestic" man.<sup>36</sup> Such teasing must have been part of his charm for men, and it can be seen, too, in his farewell verses for Guy Howarth.

Frank Moorhouse's "chain of literary genealogy" is the product of precisely the kind of mentoring that is crucial in many a literary career. Slessor's own career is a good example, and in turn he repaid his mentors by bringing out special issues of *Southerly* on Hugh McCrae (1956) and Norman Lindsay (1959). Despite the fact that he stopped writing poetry at the age of forty, Slessor was then and is still, in many circles, honoured as the father of modernism in Australian poetry. Or, in Andrew Taylor's words, his is "the moment when Australian poetry becomes itself"—precisely the claim that Slessor had made in his 1954 lectures about Hugh McCrae's 1909 book of poetry.<sup>37</sup> And so on.

Tributes to Guy Howarth, as well as to Slessor, acknowledge his role as mentor, above and beyond his role as teacher. Two of these come from former students at the University of Cape Town. Poet Stephen Gray writes of him as "the magical R.G. Howarth":

To students who might grow into SA Lit. contributors he did what *no* other academic here had done before (or has since) ... leered with tobacco-stained teeth, ordained you with a shaky hand, told you you were different and must stay that way ... Several South African careers began with Howarth's bleary endearments (C. J. Driver's, J. M. Coetzee's, Richard Rive's ...). He saw them going into exile, dying

young, suiciding, tortured ... anything but appraised and cherished; banned and reviled most likely ...<sup>38</sup>

J. M. Coetzee's published account of Howarth, in the understated mode of his novel, *Youth*, contrasts with this. The narrator finds himself the sole student in Howarth's course in early English prose writers:

Howarth has a reputation for being dry, pedantic, but he does not mind that. He has nothing against pedants. He prefers them to showmen.

They meet once a week in Howarth's office. Howarth reads his lecture aloud while he takes notes. After a few meetings Howarth simply lends him the text of the lecture to take home and read.

The lectures, which are typed in faint ribbon on crisp, yellowing paper, come out of a cabinet in which there seems to be a file on every English-language author from Austen to Yeats. Is that what one has to do to become a professor of English: read the established authors and write a lecture on each? How many years of one's life does that eat up? What does it do to one's spirit?

Howarth, who is an Australian, seems to have taken a liking to him, he cannot see why. For his part, though he cannot say he likes Howarth, he does feel protective of him for his *gaucherie*, for his delusion that South African students care in the least what he thinks about Gascoigne or Lyly or for that matter Shakespeare.<sup>39</sup>

In fact, Coetzee greatly admired Howarth as a teacher and mentor. He introduced students to the great modernists Joyce, Yeats, Eliot, Pound and Woolf. He taught first-year poetry in an unorthodox fashion: it was organised thematically, the themes illustrated by examples from contemporary American and Australian poets, including Slessor and Hope. Coetzee does not remember the Howarths getting involved in the literary life of Cape Town. Nevertheless, Howarth encouraged student writing: he held a weekly seminar where student poets read their work, and would also allow students to submit "a piece of imaginative literature" in place of an essay for their written work



during the year. Coetzee, having received a gamma mark for his first effort in literary criticism (a story told in *Youth*), thought this a much better idea, and always thereafter submitted poems, for which he received alpha marks.<sup>40</sup>

From these contrasting accounts, as well as the evidence of the letters Slessor received from male writers of all stripes, it seems clear that young men with literary talent were not expected to conform to a particular style of masculinity in order to deserve mentoring. It was enough that they were men, and talented. The criteria applied to women writers—or indeed women seeking a place in any profession—have never been so straightforward. Certainly these two editors offered no significant mentoring to women writers, if the surviving records of the period that I have examined here are any indication.

Their networks and their genealogies did not include women (women poets were a separate species, to be measured against Judith Wright). Their favoured forms of socialising (Journalists' Club, long lunches, heavy drinking) would not have been congenial to many women, nor even within their means. The *Southerly* created by Howarth and Slessor was subject to accusations of cronyism, as Stuart Lee reports.<sup>41</sup> He does not add—he perhaps does not see—that the cronyism was an all-male affair. It is a case of what we can now recognise as male bonding.

The friendship between Howarth and Slessor was founded in mutual respect and admiration, but one of its conditions was a male-centred concept of subjectivity. Women could be wives and lovers, even handmaidens to literature, but they were not seen as creative subjects of the same kind as the men were. This was no conscious conspiracy against women. Rather, I suggest that the literary profession that created *Southerly* in the 1940s, 1950s and early 60s was based on male homo-sociality—in all its richness, and with all its exclusions.

## REFERENCES

- 1 Strictly speaking, for *Southerly*'s first five years the editors were Howarth and his colleague A. G. Mitchell; but Lee is surely right to call Howarth its "catalyst and architect": S. E. Lee, "The First Fifty Years - II: *Southerly* 1939-1974", *Southerly* 34, 2, 1974, pp. 112-141, p. 117.
- 2 Lee 1974; also Stuart Lee, "Southerly" in Bruce Bennett, ed., *Cross Currents: Magazines and Newspapers in Australian Literature*, Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1981, pp. 161-71.
- 3 *A Steady Storm of Correspondence: Selected Letters of Gwen Harwood*, ed. Gregory Kratzmann, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2001, p. 73: to Tony Riddell, 4.6.59.
- 4 Ibid, p. 80: to Edwin Tanner, 27.8.59. In fact, *Southerly* had published her "Windy Night, Fern Tree" in 16, ii, 1955.
- 5 S. E. Lee, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol.14, pp. 504-5.
- 6 Thanks to Elizabeth Webby for this information.
- 7 Judith Wright, *Half a Lifetime*, ed. Patricia Clarke, Melbourne: Text, 1999, pp. 123-4.
- 8 For this information, as elsewhere in this research, I am indebted to the extensive resources provided by *AustLit: The resource for Australian Literature* [www.austlit.edu.au].
- 9 "R. G. Howarth: Two Reminiscences. I Thelma Herring and W. G. Cassidy", *Southerly* 34, iv, 1974, pp. 393-4.
- 10 "R. G. Howarth: Two Reminiscences II Margaret Trist", *Southerly* 34, iv, 1974, p. 400.
- 11 Both editorials quoted by Lee, 1974, p. 129.
- 12 Jacqueline Kent, *A Certain Style: Beatrice Davis, A Literary Life*, Penguin, 2001, pp. 74-5.
- 13 *A History of Australian Literature*, Angus & Robertson, 1956, rev. Dorothy Green, 1984, vol. 2, pp. 1330-1.
- 14 Howarth complained that Green was being "mechanical" to call the journal "academic" because of his connection with a university: "In Green's Eye", undated typescript notes on Green's *History*. Howarth Papers, National Library of Australia, MS 1085.
- 15 Slessor to Howarth, 30.10.55, Howarth Papers, National Library of Australia, MS 1085. Much of this letter is reproduced in Denis Haskell, ed., *Kenneth Slessor*, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1991, pp. 273-6. Both Davis and Bolton were also members of the English Association.
- 16 Geoffrey Dutton, *Kenneth Slessor: A Biography*, Viking Penguin, 1991, p. 310.
- 17 Slessor Papers, National Library of Australia, MS 3020/1/170: letter 3.11.55.
- 18 Letter to RGH, qtd Haskell (ed.), 276. Slessor got to know Menzies through the CLF, and received a personal note of congratulation from the then Prime Minister when he was awarded the OBE in 1959 [NLA MS 3020/1/228].



- 19 Grenfell Price, quoted by Dutton, 1991, p. 321.
- 20 Sources for this article include those letters (Howarth Papers NL MS 1085) but the bulk of Howarth's papers are held at the University of Texas and have not yet been examined. Dates of the Slessor letters to Howarth are given in the text.
- 21 *Southerly* 13, iv, 1952, pp. 166–7.
- 22 Rpr. Haskell, ed., pp. 133–5.
- 23 Slessor Papers, National Library of Australia, MS 3020/1/153.
- 24 Slessor Papers, National Library of Australia, MS 3020/1/121.
- 25 *Penguin Book of Modern Australian Verse* eds R. G. Howarth, Kenneth Slessor and John Thompson (1961 edition). The only addition since the 1958 edition was a poem of Randolph Stow.
- 26 Dutton notes the generous number of women in Slessor's *Australian Poetry 1945* (p. 265), but this was common during the war years, in journals as well as anthologies—a generosity that did not last into the peace.
- 27 Tillie Olsen, "One out of Twelve: Women who are writers in our century" in *Silences*, London: Virago, 1980, pp. 2–46.
- 28 Noted by Nancy Keesing, *Riding the Elephant*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988, p. 98.
- 29 Keesing, pp. 172–4.
- 30 Dutton, pp. 125–6.
- 31 Draft reply, Slessor Papers, National Library of Australia, MS 3020/1/310 and 311 (1961). Grace Perry may not have received the letter, but if she did, she (fortunately) paid no attention: she founded the successful magazine *Poetry Australia* in 1964 and also South Head Press, which published many significant poets. She must have got no little satisfaction when in 1966 *Southerly* published a sequence of her poems (26, iii, 1966 pp. 173–4.)
- 32 Caesar, *Kenneth Slessor*, Oxford Australian Writers Series, Melbourne: OUP, 1995, p. 109.
- 33 Slessor Papers, National Library of Australia, MS 3020/1/106.
- 34 "Southerly Now and Then", *Southerly* 59, iii–iv, 1999, pp. 128–30.
- 35 "... and ten other contributors", *Southerly* 49, iii, 1989, pp. 393–4.
- 36 "A Portrait of Kenneth Slessor", *Southerly*, 34, iv, 1974, pp. 323–341.
- 37 Slessor's lectures reprinted in Haskell, ed., *Kenneth Slessor*, p. 111. Taylor, *Reading Australian Poetry* (UQP, 1987), p. 55.
- 38 "An Australian Link in a South African Poetics", *New Literatures Review* no. 26, 1993, pp. 73–6 [ellipses in original].
- 39 J. M. Coetzee, *Youth*, London: Vintage, 2003, p. 27.
- 40 J. M. Coetzee, in conversation with the author, Adelaide, 26.8.2006.
- 41 Lee, in *Cross-Currents*, 1981, p. 165.